

WCLTA 2010

A model of development for academic administration decentralization of lab schools in the lower southern area

Rungchatchadaporn Vehachart^a *^a *Rungchatchadaporn Vehachart, Faculty of Education, Thaksin University, Thailand*

Abstract

This study searched for an appropriate approach and model for decentralization, covering the scope and operation of decentralized academic administration of lab schools in Lower Southern area of Thailand. The study utilized the documentary research methodology combined with field research. The first stage dealt with the compilation of related research literature from articles, interviews, studies, policy statements and strategic plans with

a view to formulating a conceptual model for decentralized academic administration. The second stage involved in-depth interviews with seven experts in the field from the provincial Office of Educational Area, using the snowball technique. The third stage consisted of conducting Focus Group with 12 administrators and academic teachers from 12 voluntary lab schools in six provinces.

From the in-depth interviews with experts in the fields, the appropriate model for decentralized academic administration in the lab schools in the Lower Southern area can be generalized in terms of decentralized academic administration and educational management. Aspects of decentralization include flexibility, participation and accountability. These aspects can be subcategorized into 14 tasks: 1) curriculum development for the school,

2) learning management, 3) measurement, evaluation and grade transfer, 4) research for development of educational quality in the school, 5) development and promotion of learning sources, 6) educational supervision, 7) educational guidance, 8) development of internal quality assurance and educational standard, 9) community promotion for academic strength, 10) collaboration for academic development between the school and other organizations, 11) academic promotion and support at various levels, such as person, family, organization, institution, enterprise and other educational institutions, 12) academic regulations and practices for the school, 13) selection of textbooks for the school, and 14) development of media and the use of educational technology. External assessment and focus group performance indicate quality students, professional teachers and administrators, quality school and quality community.

© 2010 Elsevier Ltd. Open access under [CC BY-NC-ND license](#).

Keywords: decentralization, academic administration

Research Methodology

This study utilized both the documentary research and field research techniques. The first phase of the study involved reviews of related literature from articles, interviews, research papers, policy statements and strategic plans to form a conceptual model for decentralized academic administration. The second phase dealt with in-depth interviews with seven experts in the field from the provincial Office of Educational Area using the snowball technique. The third phase consisted of conducting the focus group with 12 school administrators and academic teachers in the lab schools under study.

*Rungchatchadaporn Vehachart Tel.: +08-98333022; fax: +074-322521

E-mail address: vahachart@hotmail.com.

Results and Discussion

1. Academic Administration: From the in-depth interviews with experts in the field, the appropriate model for the decentralized academic administration in the lab schools in the Lower Southern Area can be generalized in terms of decentralized academic administration and educational management. Aspects of decentralization include flexibility, participation and accountability, which can be subcategorized into the following 14 tasks.

1.1 Curriculum development for the school: The study reveals that the school develops its own curriculum through research and curriculum development. The developed curriculum is aimed at promoting human perfection in the students. Local educational offices are entrusted with the task of making a school guideline. Instances of in-school curriculum development from other countries are worth considering. government recalled the task of curriculum development from the school (The Office of Education Council, 2006).

1.2 Learning management development: The teachers should provide the learning subject and activities in response to students' interest and appropriate to their ability. Students are given opportunity to practice their skills, utilize their thinking process and cope with the challenging situations. Activities should be organized for students to learn from real experience. Teaching should be conducted through an appropriate combination of various aspects of knowledge. Teachers should be encouraged to create the atmosphere and environment and to use the media and facilities for students' learning.

1.3 Measurement and evaluation: The school should specify measurement and evaluation regulations to correspond with the policy at a national level. Documents should be produced in accordance with the school measurement and evaluation regulations. Measurement, evaluation and grade transfer based on experience and grade approval should be done at each level; remedial teaching should be provided for those students who do not pass the evaluation criteria. Measurement and evaluation tools should be supplied. Information system on measurement, evaluation and grade transfer should be introduced for referencing, auditing and for development of teaching and learning.

1.4 Research for development of educational quality in the school: The school should formulate a policy and a guideline for the use of research as part of learning process and the working process of students, teachers and personnel involved with education. The school should make improvement on the teachers and students to understand the concept of educational reformation through research for complicated learning process. In this way learners are able to practice their thinking, managing and reasoning in the solution of problems.

1.5 Development and promotion of learning sources: The school should provide diverse learning sources both from within and outside the school. The aim is to support self-search for knowledge and knowledge management and learning source information management within the school for learners' learning inducement. It also encourages teachers and students to use the learning sources for learning development, supervision, monitoring, assessment and continuous improvement. In addition, teachers and students are encouraged to use learning sources from abroad.

1.6 Educational supervision: The administrators should create awareness among teachers and concerned personnel to understand that line supervision is a cooperative work process based on supervisory reasons for making improvement of each individual's work. Supervision is part of an administrative process in creating self-confidence for performing the task correctly, progressively and beneficial to the students as well as the teachers. Quality line supervision should be conducted in a thorough and continuous manner and the line supervision system should be linked to the system run by the Office of Educational Area.

1.7 Educational guidance: The administrators should formulate an educational guidance policy consisting of major factors such as creating a clear guidance organizational structure and a task of helping students. Teachers should be made aware of the merit of guidance and they should be implanted with the knowledge of psychology and guidance. Teachers should assist students in integrating their knowledge with their livelihood. Knowledgeable and capable personnel should be selected to work as guidance teachers, advising teachers and class teachers.

1.8 Development of internal quality assurance and educational standard: The school should give priority to additional standardization in consistent with that of the national standard, basic educational standard, and the standard set by the Office of Educational Area and the need of local populace. The administration and information system as well as a school plan focusing on educational quality (strategic plan)

should be established. In the operation of the project/activity, the school has to establish a strong work system which emphasizes participation and quality development using the Deming Cycle.

1.9 Community promotion for community strength: The teachers should manage the learning process with personnel, households, communities, community organizations, local administrative organizations, private sector, non-government organizations, professional organizations, religious institution, enterprises and other institutions in promoting community strength. The task can be accomplished through establishing learning process within a community, encouraging communities to engage in training, searching for knowledge and information and choosing available folk wisdoms.

1.10 Collaboration for academic development between the school and other organizations: The school should mobilize educational resources including resource persons from outside and local wisdoms to reinforce development of students in all aspects, such as in carrying on the local traditions and cultures, and forging relationship with the community as well as coordinating with public and private sectors in developing the school as a community resource. The school also takes part in community development and provides the academic service that can be linked to or exchanged of information with other academic sources.

1.11 Academic promotion and support at various levels, such as person, family, organization, institution, enterprise and other educational institutions : The educational institution should make dissemination for the public to understand the rights in the management of basic education, the use of shared resources for maximum benefits to learners, promotion of joint learning activities, search for necessary academic assistance, and promotion and development of learning sources in terms of quality and quantity for effective life-long learning. In the United States, a school board and a parent teacher organization oversee the management of the education board for each area.

1.12 Academic regulations and practices for the school: The administrators should analyze the regulations and practices for academic matter of the school for convenient performance. Regulations and practices regarding academic matter should be drawn up, revised and put into real practice. They should be audited and assessed for further improvement.

1.13 Selection of textbooks for the school: The administrators should allow the teachers to scrutinize the textbooks for quality learning in consistent with the school curriculum. The school also produces and checks for quality of its own textbooks, experience enhancing textbooks, books assigned as outside reading, exercises, worksheets and information sheets for use in accompanying teaching.

1.14 Development of media and the use of educational technology: A lab school should formulate a policy and planning in sourcing and developing learning media and educational technology. The lab school should also train its personnel to develop the media and educational technology along with the establishment of academic network and academic club to serve as learning sources of the school.

2. Decentralization of lab schools: From external assessment and focus group discussion, the findings point toward that quality students, professional teachers, professional administrators, quality schools and quality communities.

2.1 Quality students: Persons of learning, having self-confidence and possessing Thai-identity attributes: It is found that learners should make improvement in developing necessary knowledge and skills as prescribed in the curriculum to be used as a tool for further education and job engagement.

2.2 Professional teachers: Professional teachers with professional skills and self-development as required. The teachers are not able to produce teaching plans for all subjects and they should make integration of the curriculum. The teachers do not use diverse techniques in their provision of learning process.

2.3 Professional administrators : Leaders for change, independence in administration and the use of participative and accountable administration. It is found that administration should be independent in its operation. Teachers should be supervised and assessed for the performance each day. Internal information system should be established in the school and the personnel should be trained to understand the use of information system continuously.

2.4 Quality school: Good governance schools with integrated learning process and quality

assurance. It is found that the public relation task is carried out only within the premises of the school and the image and reputation of the school is not known by outsiders. The decentralization of the administration to a certain extent has not been performed throughout the school. School wide performance is not observable. It is suggested that the task performance should be dynamic

2.5 Quality community: Physical, resource and wisdom force. It is found that the school and the community should establish mutual relationship with other institutions in terms of resource mobilization from locality and non-government organization. A network system between the school and universities, educational institutions and other agencies should be established. The principle of administration is that the school should exercise convenient and independent operation, whether on the task of student admission, student referral, teacher development and resource mobilization.

The Figure A Model of Development for Academic Administration Decentralization of Lab Schools.

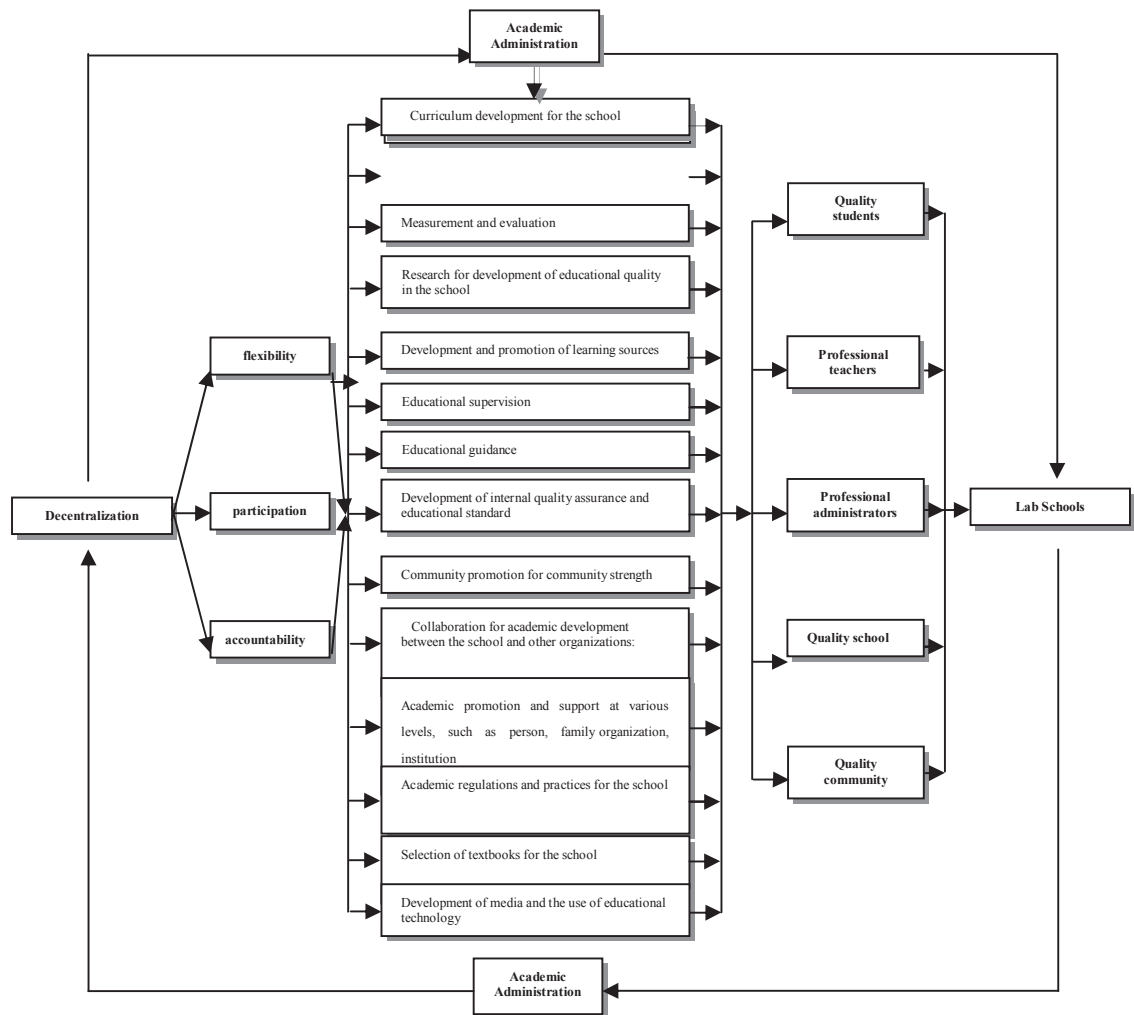


Figure 1 A Model of Development for Academic Administration Decentralization of Lab Schools

References

- Brown Denial J., (1991) *Decentralization : The Administraor's Guidebook to School District Change*. California : Corwin Press,.
- Fry, Gerald. Sermsak Wisalaporn & Somkit Lertpaitoon. (1999) *Management of Education. In Thailand : A Review and Recommendations for an Implementation Strategy for Decentralization*. Photocopied.

- Lundgren, UIF P. & Mattsson, Kerstin. (1996) “*Decentralization by or for School Improvement*, “ in *The Reconstruction of Education*. Edited by Chapmen and others. p. 139–148. London : Redwood Bcoks Limited.
- Muhamad, V.R. (1988). Black leader, and black administration, opinions and perceptions about the decentralization of New York City School, 1968-1988. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 48(9), 2479-A.
- Whitty, G.; Seddon, T. (1994) *Teachers and decentralization*. Melbourne, Victoria , Australia : National Industry Education Forum.